

## Welcome to HSC Conference 2017!

Greetings, friends! Conference vets: we're so excited to see you again! New-to-Conference folks: we can't wait to meet you! Please carefully review this letter. It contains important information that you'll need to make your conference weekend as wonderful as possible.

**Registration and Badges** - Registration is open during the following hours: Thursday 5:30-7:00pm, Friday 8:00am-3:30pm, Saturday 8:30am-3:00pm, and Sunday 8:30am-1:00pm. Please plan extra time to receive your family's badges and welcome bag. All conference attendees must wear their badges during conference events. If you lose your badge, a replacement can be purchased at the Registration Desk.

**Speakers** - If you are presenting a workshop at conference, please visit the Speaker Desk to pick up your badges and Speaker Welcome Packet. Please plan extra time before your presentation to check in with the Speaker Desk as well as the Supply Office, if necessary. If your contract includes supplies from HSC, we will deliver them to your workshop!

**Volunteers** - If you are signed up to volunteer or wish to sign up at conference, please visit the Volunteer Desk upon your arrival to connect with our Volunteer Team. Work Exchange opportunities can earn you a substantial discount on your conference ticket, and we will still be accepting signups at conference. Folks who wish to contribute less time are welcome too!

**Parking** - Overnight hotel guests will receive a 25% discount off of Hyatt parking rates (currently \$25/day.) To reduce parking costs, one of our members suggested this workaround (your mileage may vary!) "Just drop everybody and everything off at the hotel and then go park at the Milbrae Bart station down the street. Parking is free after 3 on Fridays and all weekend and only \$2 a day otherwise. You can take BART over to SFO and take the hotel shuttle OR just walk (it is 1.1 miles and I myself just walked it - not bad walk at all). Or get someone who has parking at the hotel to give you a lift."

**Dogs** - The Hyatt is a dog-friendly hotel; however, extra charges may apply. Dogs may **NOT** be left unattended in hotel rooms, and they cannot come into conference sessions, events, or spaces unless they fit completely into a doggie backpack or sling, so please plan ahead to make sure Fido has company!

**Schedule of Events** - Your Welcome Bag will include a full printed Program as well as a handy Program Schedule. If you desire extra copies of the Program Schedule, you can pre-print them at home; the Schedule is attached to this email, as well as being downloadable here: <http://hsconference.com/conference-program.html>.

We are using a web-based app called Sched this year, and you can view it from your computer here: <https://hsconference2017.sched.org/> or download it to your mobile device here: <http://hsconference2017.sched.org/mobile>. Creating your own account with Sched will enable you to create your own conference schedule!

**Wifi** - Wifi is free for guests of our conference. For conference guests who are not staying at the hotel, please visit the Information Desk for the wifi password.

**Behavior** - The Hyatt Regency SFO is our partner in creating this wonderful weekend for you. Our group is not the only group in the hotel, and not all guests at the hotel are associated with our conference. This is also our opportunity to Represent as homeschoolers, so let's be the kind of guests we'd want in our own homes and park days.

Please make sure everyone in your group is respectful of the space and the staff, and be aware that misbehavior may cause your kids to be approached by conference and/or hotel staff.

***Dangerous behavior or serious damage to the hotel could result in your family being asked to leave the conference or hotel. We're really serious about this part, folks.***

Please discuss the following points with everyone in your group, ideally prior to your arrival at conference:

- **Elevators and escalators** are tools, not toys. Please, no jumping up and down in elevators! This may require the hotel to call their engineers to reset the elevators, which inconveniences everyone. Also, please use escalators as intended, or hotel staff may shut them down for safety.
- **Quiet zones** - the elevator banks and hallways on the sleeping room floors have a 9:00pm quiet zone. Please do your socializing in the public areas, pool area, lobby and courtyards after 9:00pm to respect those trying to rest. Hotel security does enforce these quiet zones after 9:00pm.
- **Running in hallways and banging on doors** seem like obvious no-nos, but unfortunately we need to remind everyone that these behaviors are not okay.
- **Throwing anything from the Hyatt's many balconies** (even amazing paper airplanes) is dangerous! Please, resist the temptation!
- **The swimming pool** is for everyone, so please adhere to posted pool rules and make sure swim diapers are in use for the little folks who need them. Using the pool as a potty will result in the pool being closed for cleaning, which will be sad for everyone! Don't leave any child under 14 alone or with older siblings at the pool. All children must have an adult supervising at the pool. THERE ARE NO LIFEGUARDS PRESENT.
- **Helium Balloons** are not allowed at our conference, because if one is accidentally released into the hotel Atrium our group will be charged \$1000 to remove it. Balloons stuck to the ceiling nine stories up can disturb the hotel's fire safety system. Thank you!
- **The Regency Club** is a special room at the Hyatt that provides light snacks and meals throughout the day to guests who pay for this upgrade. If you've chosen to purchase Regency Club access, please ask your kids not to allow groups into this room. It may feel altruistic to kids who wish to share with their friends, but it leaves less for the folks who budgeted and paid for access.
- **Bullying** is not okay, full stop. Please reach out to conference staff if you need support.

**Lunch** - Special lunch selections will be available to conference attendees from 11:30am-2:30pm, conveniently located in the Grand Peninsula Foyer. Conference guests can also visit the restaurant upstairs in the Atrium for sit-down meals or grab a snack from the Hotel Market. Unless you have a special consideration such as a food allergy, please refrain from bringing outside food into the restaurant area.

**Curfew** - The open-air Atrium at the Hyatt has a closing time of 1:30am, after which the hotel's common space is closed to all guests. After 1:30am, guests should adjourn to their rooms for socializing in private space, or even perhaps get a good night's sleep! Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

**Teen Events and Teen Room** - The Teen Room and teen events such as evening dances, events and workshops are designed by and for the teens of conference. However, as homeschoolers we understand that for many kids, age is just a number! If kids younger than 13 are interested in activities in the Teen Conference, we recommend that families discuss and decide with their children what activities they think will be appropriate for them to attend. Please read the teen workshop and events descriptions carefully. The content and subject matter of teen workshops and events may not be appropriate for younger kids.

Tweens who feel ready to enter "teen space" may do so as long as they can comport themselves as teens, and with the understanding that teens are not asked to modulate their behavior for younger guests in their space. We do not check for "teen badges" at teen events, nor are teens deputized to bounce other kids from any conference event. However, if any child at conference is disruptive to the atmosphere in which they are participating, an adult chaperone may ask that child to leave the space. In this way, we hope to provide for the needs of teens who wish to be surrounded by other teens in teen space, without promoting a strictly age-segregated atmosphere.

### **Parental Supervision**

- All children under the age of 14 must have a parent or caregiver immediately available to them at the Hyatt Regency SFO. HSC and the conference staff take no responsibility for childcare.
- We do not offer childcare of any kind (even in the children's areas). This is a family conference: enjoy the workshops and activities together. The Caregiver Pass allows one parent to attend adult events alone, while the other adult can tend to the kids at our special areas or family workshops. Caregiver passes are not transferable.
- Stay with your children at all times. Children must wear conference badges. *Write your cell phone number (with area code) on the back so that we can reunite children with lost parents.* Please take lost parents or children to the Information Desk.
- Children 9 and under must have a responsible adult supervising them at all times. This means that someone (one parent can supervise multiple children) needs to be right in the child's vicinity in case the child needs assistance.
- For 10 to 13 year olds, parents must be in attendance at the conference and immediately available at all times. This means parents cannot leave the child at the hotel while they run to the mall, go out to eat with friends, etc. Parents don't have to attend workshops with the preteens.
- Of course, never leave children alone in hotel rooms.

**Raffle** - Tickets will be sold throughout the conference by friendly folks milling around the Exhibit Hall and other areas. They will be \$1 each, 12 for \$10 and 25 for \$20. The drawing will be on Sunday at 12 pm at the HSC Info Table where a list of winners will be posted.

**Talent Show** - Please sign up at the Information Desk! The signup sheet will be out on Saturday until 6:00pm. Talent Show begins at 8:00pm on Saturday.

**Exhibit Hall** - Our Exhibit Hall is once again jam-packed with amazing vendors here to support your homeschool journey. The Exhibit Hall will be open from 10:00am-6:00pm on Saturday, and from 10:00am-3:00pm on Sunday.

**Bizarre Bazaar** - If you are bringing recycled or handmade items to vend at our Bizarre Bazaar, please make sure to bring change or be ready to accept credit cards on your phone. Set up begins at 1:30pm on Friday, and the event concludes at 6:00pm. Please direct questions to **[RockAcademyRocks@gmail.com](mailto:RockAcademyRocks@gmail.com)**.

**Feedback Forms** - Your feedback helps conference grow better every year, yet we understand that you may not want to fill out a separate form for each and every workshop you attend. So this year, we will be sending out a nightly email feedback form, asking for a quick few comments before you forget what your favorites and suggestions for improvement were. A few days after conference concludes, we'll send one more general survey for your overall feedback. Thank you in advance for your participation!

**Finally, here are some Things to Bring to Conference:**

- Healthful snacks, refillable water bottles
- Sweaters/light layers for possibly cold hotel meeting rooms
- Swimsuits
- Cell phones or walkie talkies to stay in touch with family during conference (bear in mind that wifi is spotty at best within conference rooms, but is free in common areas)
- Your recycled curricula and/or handmade crafts to sell at the Bizarre Bazaar
- Cash in small bills to make purchases and make change at the Bizarre Bazaar
- Your creativity and props/musical instruments for the Talent Show
- Laptop computer or tablet for the Gamers' Lounge
- Foam weapons for LARPing (subject to inspection by LARP masters)
- Magic the Gathering cards in case of pop up tournament or casual game opportunities
- Costume(s) for the Family Dance, and/or Teen dances and events
- Items to donate to the Teen Lounge - Bean Bags, big cushions, games, coloring books...
- Items to donate to the Makerspace - cardboard, interesting recyclables (like strawberry baskets, bottle caps, etc), fabric, sewing needles and thread, art supplies, and scrap wood
- Clean used clothes to donate to Swap-o-rama!
- Clothing of your own that you wish to alter or embellish at the Swap-o-rama!
- A spare hour or two to pitch in and volunteer - or - six hours to join the Work Exchange program and earn back a portion of your registration fee!

Thank you for reading this long letter! If you have any questions, please email them to me at **[hscconference@gmail.com](mailto:hscconference@gmail.com)**.

See you soon!

Sasha

HSC Conference Coordinator